

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 469.—VOL. IX.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1892.

PRICE 1½d.

NOVELISTS' PICTURES.

THE spread of education and the growth of Free Libraries have undoubtedly stimulated the appetite for fiction, and added largely to the great army of novel-readers. The novelist may regard the fact with unconcealed exultation ; the man of serious mind, who likes his literature solid, and is not troubled with an excess of imagination, may deplore and condemn this development of the love for what he contemptuously styles 'light reading.' Between these possible extremes is a mass of fluctuating opinion. Many public speakers and writers, when touching on this topic, appear to feel themselves bound to regret, in a more or less half-hearted way, the over-proportionate attention shown to fiction, as evidenced by library statistics and publishers' returns ; while at the same time they are obliged to confess that, after all, it is only a perfectly natural phenomenon. Novel-readers, who are of all ages and of all ranks, do not trouble themselves much about the matter. Incident, character, gashliness, crime, philosophy, theological discussion, humour—all, as exhibited in fiction, attract special classes of readers. A literature that can suit so many diverse tastes, and which is read for such an infinite variety of reasons, needs no formal vindication.

There is one feature in modern fiction of the better class which is especially attractive to dwellers in cities, and to all whose lives consist largely in a daily routine of bread-winning, but not specially interesting or intellectually stimulating labour. These readers find particular enjoyment in what we may call the novelists' pictures. Landscape, seascape, still-life, rural life, are all to be found, with many other kinds of art, often in great perfection, in the pages of popular novels. These pictures can be enjoyed without reference to the stories in which they appear ; and one striking scene of natural beauty may remain photographed upon the mind when plot and dialogue, incident and character,

have all vanished into the limbo of forgetfulness.

Scott, encyclopaedic novelist as he is—touching all themes, and adorning all that he touches—has not many set scenes of sea- or land-scape, but his interiors are imitable. The description of the Antiquary's study, with its multifarious contents and wealth of learned litter, is a masterpiece in the Dutch or Flemish style. Other striking pictures of the same school are the drinking-bout in Luckie Macleary's change-house, which so narrowly escaped a tragic ending ; the Alsatian tavern in the *Fortunes of Nigel* where Duke Hildebrod admits the fugitive Scotch lord to all the privileges of the Whitefriars ; and more than one scene in *Rob Roy*.

Dickens has not much to show in the way of landscape ; but the harsh ugliness and mist-laden desolation of the river-side marsh districts haunt the memory of the reader of *Great Expectations*. A few bits might be recalled ; but, as a rule, the picturesque in landscape is not much touched by the author of *Pickwick*. The same may be said, though not so strongly, of Thackeray. It would be difficult to point out any complete or striking picture either of land or sea scenery in any one of his novels. Character and humour are all in all.

Hawthorne has several pictures of singular interest and force. Most striking of all, perhaps, is that scene in the *Scarlet Letter* where Arthur Dimmesdale, conscience-driven, ascends at dead of night the platform of shame, where he is joined by Hester and the child. All three suddenly stand revealed as the glare of the lightning-flash for a moment lights up the sleeping town, and shows the strange scene of midnight penance to the eye of the single witness, the mocking Roger Chillingworth. Many of Hawthorne's short sketches are simply pictures drawn by a master-hand, which, being drawn, are left to tell their own tale and point their own moral. Some are wonderfully vivid. There are few more impressive things in literature than *Young Goodman Brown*, wherein the night-walk through the

forest and the scene of hellish revelry at the great gathering of the witches are depicted with extraordinary power.

Among more recent novels, Mr William Black's are pre-eminently rich in pictorial wealth. With such a book, for example, as *White Wings* in his hands, the city-bound reader can behold a succession of invigorating sea-scenes. A few strokes of the novelist's pen and he is in the midst of a broad sweep of sunlit sea; above him strains the bellying canvas, and beyond the few feet of shining deck heave the deep green surges. He feels the spray upon his face, and the salt sea-breeze upon his cheek. What more delightful picture than this can be revealed to the mind's eye of a reader by the fireside, on a December or January evening, when the actual world outside offers nought but mud and mire, damp, darkness, and cold? Scenes of this kind abound in Mr Black's books; but landscapes also are not wanting, as no reader of the *Strange Adventures of a Phaeton* will need to be told. There is a lovely morning picture of woodland scenery in *Green Pastures and Piccadilly*. The early, golden light strikes through the long lines of the trees in a Surrey wood, and a lady, who has risen early to enjoy the sylvan scene, stands motionless to watch the gambols of the rabbits that flash in and out of their holes, and are the only disturbers of the peace that lies brooding among the sun-touched trunks, and on the glorified bracken and underwood.

Sea-pictures of great force and beauty and of an infinite variety are to be found in the books of Mr Clark Russell, a writer who adds to an intimate knowledge of every aspect of the ocean, an unequalled power of vividly presenting to the reader its every phase, its beauty, its music, and its grandeur.

Beautiful and finished pictures of various kinds are also to be found in the works of many other living novelists. Ouida occasionally succeeds in a very marked degree, but too often her pictures are painty and laboured, and sometimes gaudy. There are lovely views of New Forest scenery in Miss Braddon's *Vixen*; and her most finished and artistic novel, *Joshua Haggard's Daughter*, contains more than one picture of Cornish furze-grown common and breezy hill-side that live in the memory. In George Meredith's *Richard Feverel* there is a beautiful river-side scene, wherein young Richard first experiences the delirium of youthful love, which in any collection of novelists' landscapes would assuredly take high rank. Some of Mr Walter Besant's stories of the last century contain elaborate and very carefully finished drawings of quaint interiors. The curiously-named story, *The World went very well Then*, begins with a singularly vivid and faithful reproduction of an ancient apothecary's shop and its adjoining living-room.

George Eliot's first great novel opens with a perfect picture. No reader of *Adam Bede* can

ever forget that country carpenter's shop, sweet with the fragrance of newly-cut wood, where the slant beams of the evening sun light upon the stalwart figure of Adam singing as he works. Admirers of Mrs Poyser do not need to be reminded of the many delightful pictures of grange and farmstead, and of the rich, cultivated landscape of Central England, that adorn the pages of *Adam Bede* and other novels by the same hand. In her later works, where the style becomes more artificial, and where the influence of the sweet Warwickshire meadows and woodlands has only too evidently yielded to that of modern philosophy and metaphysics, George Eliot's brush loses much of its picturesque power. Occasionally there is a touch of the earlier manner. In *Theophrastus Such* there is a passage in the essay on 'Looking Backward' which is strongly reminiscent of Mrs Poyser's country: 'And then the tiled roof of cottage and homestead, of the long cow-shed where generations of the milky mothers have stood patiently, of the broad-shouldered barns where the old-fashioned flail once made resonant music, while the watchdog barked at the timidly venturesome fowls making pecking raids on the outlying grain—the roofs that have looked out from among the elms and walnut trees, or beside the yearly group of hay and corn stacks, or below the square stone steeple, gathering their gray or ochre tinted lichens and their olive-green mosses under all ministries.'

Like all great writers, George Eliot recognises the village inn as the glass wherein country humour and manners mirror themselves. The immortal scene at the 'Rainbow' in *Silas Marner* is perfect in drawing as in humour. Another ingathering of a different kind is that at the 'Sugar Loaf' in *Felix Holt*, where Boniface proclaims his political creed in a delightfully simple and yet comprehensive fashion: 'I'll plump or I'll split for them as treat me the handsomest and are the most of what I call gentlemen; that's my idee. And in the way of hacting for any man, them are fools that don't employ me.'

Scenes of rustic life and manners of another kind are to be found in the Dorsetshire tales of Thomas Hardy. His books abound in cottage and tavern interiors, whose characteristics are graphically delineated in a few lines, while life is given to the picture by the Shakespearean-like humour of the clowns, with whose ways and modes of thought the Wessex novelist is so intimately acquainted. Mr Hardy is also a master of landscape. Casterbridge, or Dorchester, with its approaches of pillared shade, is painted with a loving hand in more than one of his novels; and the Wessex downs and fertile vales, dotted with many a quaint old crumbling church tower, are drawn with a vividness and a feeling for natural beauty that afford a constant pleasure to the reader. A little farther west, and we are on the ground which Mr Blackmore has made peculiarly his own. *Lorna Doone* has revealed the

beauties of Exmoor to many a wondering reader ; and the greater Devonian tableland, Dartmoor, is a topic of which Mr Blackmore does not easily weary. There are many pictures of it, both in its sunny aspect, when from an unclouded sky the sun beats fiercely on miles of heather and bog and granite rock ; and in its hours of storm and tempest and driving mist, when danger besets the feet of the unwary wayfarer at every step. Its every aspect may be found depicted in a masterly manner in *Christowell, Cripps the Carrier*, and other of Mr Blackmore's books.

It is hardly necessary to mention in this connection the works of Richard Jefferies, for, as a novelist, this wonderful observer of Nature was somewhat of a failure. But poorly as *Bevis* and its brethren may rank as works of fiction, they contain many exquisite word-pictures worthy to be placed beside those which fill the pages of his earlier and greater books. Jefferies has sometimes been styled a cataloguer rather than a painter of Nature ; but the criticism is not just. His effects are gained by the perfect rendering of a multiplicity of details, but the arrangement of the material is no mere dry, mechanical catalogue. Every stroke, every detail tells, until the carefully and delicately elaborated picture is complete.

Another great master of the picturesque is Robert Louis Stevenson. There are seascapes in *Treasure Island*, and winter pictures of American woods, deep in snow and haunted by the stealthily gliding forms of silent Indians, in that wonderful romance *The Master of Ballantrae*, that are graven deep on the mental retina of all readers who are gifted with the smallest spark of imagination. The latest of his books, *The Wrecker*, has some very vivid pictures of tropical storms in the South Seas, when 'overhead, the wild huntsman of the storm passed continuously in one blare of mingled noises ; screaming wind, straining timber, lashing rope's end, pounding block, and bursting sea contributed.' But it is, perhaps, in *Kidnapped* that Mr Stevenson's descriptive powers are seen at their best. The 'Flight in the Heather' of Alan Breck and poor David Balfour of Shaws is a continuous panorama of Highland scenery. Here is a western loch : 'It was near noon before we set out ; a dark day, with clouds, and the sun shining upon little patches. The sea was here very deep and still, and had scarce a wave upon it, so that I must put the water to my lips before I could believe it to be truly salt. The mountains on either side were high, rough, and barren, very black and gloomy in the shadow of the clouds, but all silver-laced with little watercourses where the sun shone upon them.' Without any attempt at what is ordinarily called word-painting, with no straining after effect by the use of extravagant and far-fetched descriptions and similes, by the simple but masterly use of a few lines in black and white, a perfect picture is produced.

In the same natural but graphic way the loneliness of a Highland glen is placed before us : 'The dawn had come quite clear ; we could see the stony sides of the valley, and its bottom, which was bestrewed with rocks, and the river, which

went from one side to another, and made white falls ; but nowhere the smoke of a house, nor any living creature but some eagles screaming round a cliff.' The scene changes to 'a cleft in the head of a great mountain, with a water running through the midst, and upon the one hand a shallow cave in a rock. Birches grew there in a thin, pretty wood, which a little farther on was changed into a wood of pines. The burn was full of trout ; the wood of cushat-doves ; on the open side of the mountain beyond, whaups would be always whistling, and cuckoos were plentiful.' Loch and glen and mountain side need only the desolate moorland to complete the picture of the Highlands : 'The mist rose and died away, and showed us that country lying as waste as the sea ; only the moorfowl and the peewees crying upon it, and far over to the east, a herd of deer, moving like dots. Much of it was red with heather ; much of the rest broken up with bogs and hags and peaty pools ; some had been burnt black in a heath-fire ; and in another place there was quite a forest of dead firs, standing like skeletons.'

It is not every writer who can paint a picture in plain prose, who can set forth in a few lines a scene, distinct as life and instinct with life, before his readers' eyes. The rendering of colour is a further difficulty. Poetry lends itself more easily to the art. Shelley, when Ione describes the shell that Proteus presented to Asia, gives a perfect picture in three lines :

See the pale azure fading into silver,
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light ;
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there ?

Shelley's delicately beautiful drawing and Keats's gorgeous colouring are beyond the reach of the humbler artist in prose. The novelist's pictures, life-like though they may be, must always partake to some degree of a Quaker-like simplicity in the matter of colour. In compensation for this defect, the novelist can give us greater firmness of outline and a more realistic rendering of details. And these two qualities go far to make the perfect prose picture that delights the eye of the reader, and remains engraved upon the tablets of the brain, a thing of beauty which is a joy for ever.

THE IRONY OF FATE.

CHAPTER VIII.—ESCAPED.

Two days had passed, but nothing fresh occurred to excite further alarm or suspicion in the mind of Arabella Alsworth. Lord Cransford still remained a guest at the Hall, and was unusually kind and amiable in his manner to her. Major Bowyer, on the contrary, preserved an appearance of indifference, almost of contempt, which ill concealed the rage that filled his mind and heart.

On the third day, shortly after breakfast, Thomas the footman knocked at the door of Arabella's sitting-room and asked if he could speak to her, and being told to 'come in,' he entered cautiously and closed the door.

'What is it, Thomas?' she asked.

forest and the scene of hellish revelry at the great gathering of the witches are depicted with extraordinary power.

Among more recent novels, Mr William Black's are pre-eminently rich in pictorial wealth. With such a book, for example, as *White Wings* in his hands, the city-bound reader can behold a succession of invigorating sea-scenes. A few strokes of the novelist's pen and he is in the midst of a broad sweep of sunlit sea; above him strains the bellying canvas, and beyond the few feet of shining deck heave the deep green surges. He feels the spray upon his face, and the salt sea-breeze upon his cheek. What more delightful picture than this can be revealed to the mind's eye of a reader by the fireside, on a December or January evening, when the actual world outside offers nought but mud and mire, damp, darkness, and cold? Scenes of this kind abound in Mr Black's books; but landscapes also are not wanting, as no reader of the *Strange Adventures of a Phaeton* will need to be told. There is a lovely morning picture of woodland scenery in *Green Pastures and Piccadilly*. The early, golden light strikes through the long lines of the trees in a Surrey wood, and a lady, who has risen early to enjoy the sylvan scene, stands motionless to watch the gambols of the rabbits that flash in and out of their holes, and are the only disturbers of the peace that lies brooding among the sun-touched trunks, and on the glorified bracken and underwood.

Sea-pictures of great force and beauty and of an infinite variety are to be found in the books of Mr Clark Russell, a writer who adds to an intimate knowledge of every aspect of the ocean, an unequalled power of vividly presenting to the reader its every phase, its beauty, its music, and its grandeur.

Beautiful and finished pictures of various kinds are also to be found in the works of many other living novelists. Ouida occasionally succeeds in a very marked degree, but too often her pictures are painty and laboured, and sometimes gaudy. There are lovely views of New Forest scenery in Miss Braddon's *Vixen*; and her most finished and artistic novel, *Joshua Haggard's Daughter*, contains more than one picture of Cornish furze-grown common and breezy hill-side that live in the memory. In George Meredith's *Richard Feverel* there is a beautiful river-side scene, wherein young Richard first experiences the delirium of youthful love, which in any collection of novelists' landscapes would assuredly take high rank. Some of Mr Walter Besant's stories of the last century contain elaborate and very carefully finished drawings of quaint interiors. The curiously-named story, *The World went very well Then*, begins with a singularly vivid and faithful reproduction of an ancient apothecary's shop and its adjoining living-room.

George Eliot's first great novel opens with a perfect picture. No reader of *Adam Bede* can

ever forget that country carpenter's shop, sweet with the fragrance of newly-cut wood, where the slant beams of the evening sun light upon the stalwart figure of Adam singing as he works. Admirers of Mrs Poyer do not need to be reminded of the many delightful pictures of grange and farmstead, and of the rich, cultivated landscape of Central England, that adorn the pages of *Adam Bede* and other novels by the same hand. In her later works, where the style becomes more artificial, and where the influence of the sweet Warwickshire meadows and woodlands has only too evidently yielded to that of modern philosophy and metaphysics, George Eliot's brush loses much of its picturesque power. Occasionally there is a touch of the earlier manner. In *Theophrastus Such* there is a passage in the essay on 'Looking Backward' which is strongly reminiscent of Mrs Poyer's country: 'And then the tiled roof of cottage and homestead, of the long cow-shed where generations of the milky mothers have stood patiently, of the broad-shouldered barns where the old-fashioned flail once made resonant music, while the watchdog barked at the timidly venturesome fowls making pecking raids on the outlying grain—the roofs that have looked out from among the elms and walnut trees, or beside the yearly group of hay and corn stacks, or below the square stone steeple, gathering their gray or ochre tinted lichens and their olive-green mosses under all ministries.'

Like all great writers, George Eliot recognises the village inn as the glass wherein country humour and manners mirror themselves. The immortal scene at the 'Rainbow' in *Silas Marner* is perfect in drawing as in humour. Another inn-gathering of a different kind is that at the 'Sugar Loaf' in *Felix Holt*, where Boniface proclaims his political creed in a delightfully simple and yet comprehensive fashion: 'I'll plump or I'll split for them as treat me the handsomest and are the most of what I call gentlemen; that's my idee. And in the way of hacting for any man, them are fools that don't employ me.'

Scenes of rustic life and manners of another kind are to be found in the Dorsetshire tales of Thomas Hardy. His books abound in cottage and tavern interiors, whose characteristics are graphically delineated in a few lines, while life is given to the picture by the Shakespearean-like humour of the clowns, with whose ways and modes of thought the Wessex novelist is so intimately acquainted. Mr Hardy is also a master of landscape. Casterbridge, or Dorchester, with its approaches of pillared shade, is painted with a loving hand in more than one of his novels; and the Wessex downs and fertile vales, dotted with many a quaint old crumbling church tower, are drawn with a vividness and a feeling for natural beauty that afford a constant pleasure to the reader. A little farther west, and we are on the ground which Mr Blackmore has made peculiarly his own. *Lorna Doone* has revealed the

beauties of Exmoor to many a wondering reader ; and the greater Devonian tableland, Dartmoor, is a topic of which Mr Blackmore does not easily weary. There are many pictures of it, both in its sunny aspect, when from an unclouded sky the sun beats fiercely on miles of heather and bog and granite rock ; and in its hours of storm and tempest and driving mist, when danger besets the feet of the unwary wayfarer at every step. Its every aspect may be found depicted in a masterly manner in *Christowell, Cripps the Carrier*, and other of Mr Blackmore's books.

It is hardly necessary to mention in this connection the works of Richard Jefferies, for, as a novelist, this wonderful observer of Nature was somewhat of a failure. But poorly as *Bevis* and its brethren may rank as works of fiction, they contain many exquisite word-pictures worthy to be placed beside those which fill the pages of his earlier and greater books. Jefferies has sometimes been styled a cataloguer rather than a painter of Nature ; but the criticism is not just. His effects are gained by the perfect rendering of a multiplicity of details, but the arrangement of the material is no mere dry, mechanical catalogue. Every stroke, every detail tells, until the carefully and delicately elaborated picture is complete.

Another great master of the picturesque is Robert Louis Stevenson. There are seascapes in *Treasure Island*, and winter pictures of American woods, deep in snow and haunted by the stealthily gliding forms of silent Indians, in that wonderful romance *The Master of Ballantrae*, that are graven deep on the mental retina of all readers who are gifted with the smallest spice of imagination. The latest of his books, *The Wrecker*, has some very vivid pictures of tropical storms in the South Seas, when 'overhead, the wild huntsman of the storm passed continuously in one blare of mingled noises ; screaming wind, straining timber, lashing rope's end, pounding block, and bursting sea contributed.' But it is, perhaps, in *Kidnapped* that Mr Stevenson's descriptive powers are seen at their best. The 'Flight in the Heather' of Alan Breck and poor David Balfour of Shaws is a continuous panorama of Highland scenery. Here is a western loch : 'It was near noon before we set out ; a dark day, with clouds, and the sun shining upon little patches. The sea was here very deep and still, and had scarce a wave upon it, so that I must put the water to my lips before I could believe it to be truly salt. The mountains on either side were high, rough, and barren, very black and gloomy in the shadow of the clouds, but all silver-laced with little watercourses where the sun shone upon them.' Without any attempt at what is ordinarily called word-painting, with no straining after effect by the use of extravagant and far-fetched descriptions and similes, by the simple but masterly use of a few lines in black and white, a perfect picture is produced.

In the same natural but graphic way the loneliness of a Highland glen is placed before us : 'The dawn had come quite clear ; we could see the stony sides of the valley, and its bottom, which was bestrewed with rocks, and the river, which

went from one side to another, and made white falls ; but nowhere the smoke of a house, nor any living creature but some eagles screaming round a cliff.' The scene changes to 'a cleft in the head of a great mountain, with a water running through the midst, and upon the one hand a shallow cave in a rock. Birches grew there in a thin, pretty wood, which a little farther on was changed into a wood of pines. The burn was full of trout ; the wood of cushatdoves ; on the open side of the mountain beyond, whaups would be always whistling, and cuckoos were plentiful.' Loch and glen and mountain side need only the desolate moorland to complete the picture of the Highlands : 'The mist rose and died away, and showed us that country lying as waste as the sea ; only the moorfowl and the peewees crying upon it, and far over to the east, a herd of deer, moving like dots. Much of it was red with heather ; much of the rest broken up with bogs and hags and peaty pools ; some had been burnt black in a heath-fire ; and in another place there was quite a forest of dead firs, standing like skeletons.'

It is not every writer who can paint a picture in plain prose, who can set forth in a few lines a scene, distinct as life and instinct with life, before his readers' eyes. The rendering of colour is a further difficulty. Poetry lends itself more easily to the art. Shelley, when Ione describes the shell that Proteus presented to Asia, gives a perfect picture in three lines :

See the pale azure fading into silver,
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light ;
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there ?

Shelley's delicately beautiful drawing and Keats's gorgeous colouring are beyond the reach of the humbler artist in prose. The novelist's pictures, life-like though they may be, must always partake to some degree of a Quaker-like simplicity in the matter of colour. In compensation for this defect, the novelist can give us greater firmness of outline and a more realistic rendering of details. And these two qualities go far to make the perfect prose picture that delights the eye of the reader, and remains engraved upon the tablets of the brain, a thing of beauty which is a joy for ever.

THE IRONY OF FATE.

CHAPTER VIII.—ESCAPED.

Two days had passed, but nothing fresh occurred to excite further alarm or suspicion in the mind of Arabella Alsworth. Lord Cransford still remained a guest at the Hall, and was unusually kind and amiable in his manner to her. Major Bowyer, on the contrary, preserved an appearance of indifference, almost of contempt, which ill concealed the rage that filled his mind and heart.

On the third day, shortly after breakfast, Thomas the footman knocked at the door of Arabella's sitting-room and asked if he could speak to her, and being told to 'come in,' he entered cautiously and closed the door.

'What is it, Thomas ?' she asked.

'Are you quite alone, miss ?'
 'Yes, quite alone.'
 'Excuse me, miss, but did you get a letter this morning ?'
 'No. Why do you ask ?'
 'You won't let master know that I told you—will you, miss ?'
 'No ; you may depend on my secrecy.'
 'There was one for you, miss ; I saw it on the Major's desk. I thought you wouldn't get it, from what I overheard. It's a plot, miss, against you : you are to be carried off and compromised—that's what they said.'

'Who said so ?'

'Lord Cransford and master. They talked about post-horses and chloroform.'

'How came you to hear all this ?' asked Arabella.

The man hung his head and grew quite red in the face. 'I heard your name, miss, and I couldn't help it—I listened.'

'Very wrong, I know, Thomas ; but very fortunate for me.—Thank you very much. This information is most valuable. It is very kind of you, and I shall not forget it.'

'Just one word more, miss. If you've any secrets, don't trust 'em to Mrs Manser ; she's in the plot.'

When the man was gone, Arabella sat down to think. It was, then, as she had suspected—her letters had been intercepted. Fortunately for her, her suspicion had been so far aroused that she had herself posted the last letter she had written to Frank. This annoyed and vexed her beyond measure, for she had very little doubt not only that her letters had been intercepted but that they also had been read. That was, however, of small moment. The idea of being compelled to marry Lord Cransford was most repugnant to her, and it was now evident that, by fair means or foul, her uncle intended she should be Lord Cransford's bride ; and, if no other means would serve their purpose, her reputation was to be tarnished. She could hardly realise that men could be such monsters ; but at anyrate she must meet plot by plot. She was not safe under her uncle's roof. If she staid any longer at Clumber Park, she felt sure her doom was fixed. She must either flee or tamely submit. She resolved on the former, whatever might be the consequence, and now thought of nothing but how this could be accomplished.

She was not long in deciding on the course she would take ; she had plenty of money, for the greater portion of her quarter's allowance was still in hand ; and she had a goodly number of jewels, many of which were valuable. When all in the house were asleep, she would steal down-stairs and make her escape. She would make her way to London, take some cheap lodgings in one of the outskirts, and wait till she was of age. If her funds did not last, she would apply to Mr Ainsley ; she felt sure he would assist her. Indeed, if she did not change her mind, she had half decided she would go to him at once and seek his advice. At anyrate, rather than return

to her guardian's protection, she would work for her living—do anything, rather than be tied to such a man as Lord Cransford.

So the day passed ; and a little after midnight Arabella, dressed very plainly, opened her chamber door, and listened. All was silent. She took up her bag and umbrella and advanced to the top of the stairs, and again listened. All silent. She passed softly down the carpeted stairs, and, approaching the door, was endeavouring to lift the great bar which secured the entrance, when she was startled by the sound of voices in angry altercation, and she paused, letting the bar drop softly back into its place. The next instant the study door was flung violently open, and Lord Cransford came out, cursing loudly, and vowing that Major Bowyer was a cheat. For a moment Arabella was so paralysed with fright that she could not move. The light from the study fell full upon her, and she expected every moment to be discovered and dragged into the study and an explanation demanded.

It soon became evident that the two men were in an advanced state of inebriation ; and the language used by Lord Cransford was of such a character that her soul revolted at it ; but what roused her indignation most was to think that her uncle wanted to marry her to such a man. The thought made her shiver.

After a good deal of remonstrance and persuasion Lord Cransford was induced to return to the study ; the door was closed, and all was once more quiet.

'What should she do now ?' was the question Arabella asked herself. 'Should she unbar the door and make a dash for liberty ? Or should she return to her room and wait a more favourable opportunity ?'

She chose the former, and again essayed to lift the weighty bar—this time successfully. The key was turned ; the latch was lifted ; the door swung open ; there was a strong rush of air and then the report of a door closing. Arabella was startled ; but she had sufficient presence of mind to shut the Hall door quickly, yet quietly, and hurry off down the avenue leading to the lodge. She hastened on till she reached the gates, and, to her great disappointment found them locked. This, to a girl of Arabella's temperament, was not an insuperable obstacle. She was strong and agile ; and finding a place in the wall where she could reach the top, she drew herself up, dropping softly on the other side. She paused for an instant to listen : not a sound could be heard but the roaring of the wind. Thus far all had gone well ; and she started to walk along a country lane leading to a distant village.

Major Bowyer was never an early riser ; but on the morning following Arabella's flight, he was unusually late, both he and Lord Cransford having indulged more freely than usual on the previous night. The first thing he did on entering the breakfast-room was to inquire for Arabella, and he was told that she had not yet left her room.

'Go and call her ; tell her I'm waiting for my breakfast,' he said testily.

Thomas left the room, returning in a few minutes with the intelligence that Miss Alsworth was not in her room ; and her maid said that the

bed had not been slept in. Search was at once made high and low, but no Arabella could be found.

Major Bowyer's stern and dark though still handsome countenance was more dark and lowering than usual when he realised the fact that his wicked plot had been defeated and that his victim had escaped. He was still more annoyed when Lord Cransford, on hearing of her flight, announced his intention of throwing up the game and proceeding to London by the next train.

Major Bowyer was, as may be imagined, dreadfully irate at Lord Cransford's desertion; and Thomas and the grooms who were sent to scour the country in search of the fugitive had rather a bad time of it; and in the end, when no tidings could be obtained of Arabella, Major Bowyer retreated to his study, there to drown his anxiety and vexation in his accustomed potations.

Arabella, previous to starting, had carefully arranged her plan. She had decided that, instead of taking the train for London from the nearest station, she would walk to a small town some three miles distant, and take the down-train for Exeter. On her arrival she at once proceeded to the Queen Street Station, with a view to take the up-train by the South-western to Waterloo. Here, finding that she had over two hours to wait, she proceeded to a waiting-room, where she had not been long seated, when an old lady and her maid entered and sat down not far distant. The lady seemed of rather a garrulous nature, and after dilating on the stupidity of railway directors in not having trains ready for people, and telling Arabella where she was going to, she said: 'You seem to have no one with you, my child; you are very young to travel alone.'

'Yes, I am quite alone,' replied Arabella.

'And where is your destination?'

'London.'

'Have you friends there?'

'No.'

'I'm not inquisitive,' said the old lady after a pause; 'but I should very much like to know what is the business which is taking you to London?'

'No business at all. I've run away from my guardian.'

'Run away! What for?'

'Because he wanted to marry me to a bad man, a man I hated.'

'And you are going to London alone, and have no friends there! Why, child, you must be mad!'

'Oh! I've got plenty of friends, but not in London;' and then the poor girl, who was moved by the tender tones of the stranger, told her the whole story. When Arabella mentioned the name of Lord Cransford, the old lady started.

'Lord Cransford!' she exclaimed. 'My dear child, what an escape you've had! He's the most disreputable young man I know. I don't wonder at you running away; but to go to London without money or friends!'

'Oh! I've plenty of money,' retorted Arabella; 'so, if you will help me to find respectable lodgings when I get there, you will be doing me a great service.'

'Lodgings, child! Let you go into lodgings all by yourself! No, no; I'm going to take you home with me.'

'Oh yes, gladly, if you will let me pay for my board and apartments.'

'I don't let apartments, and I don't take boarders,' replied the old lady, 'but I wish to have a companion for a time, and I have taken a fancy to you, if you will come.'

'I am not sure,' replied Arabella, 'that I would be right in engaging myself permanently, more especially that I have money to pay for what I want.'

'Don't you see,' answered the lady, 'that a girl, a beautiful and attractive girl like you, living alone in lodgings, would be in great danger? It's not to be thought of. You do not know me, and I admire your independence. Indeed, if you will not accept of my invitation, I do not know what can be done; however, we will talk more about it in the train, as I see Johnson has taken our tickets. You had better get yours. Have you any luggage?'

'No, not any,' replied Arabella, with some hesitation. She was looking with something like dismay at the grand gentleman in livery who addressed the little old lady as 'Your Grace!' She felt hot and red, and ready to sink into the earth. This lady to whom she had offered payment for her board and lodgings was a Duchess! It was a dreadful situation; but at the moment there was nothing to be done but to get her ticket, which she did at once.

When they were seated and the train had started, the old lady turned to Arabella and said laughingly: 'Now, child, will you refuse to accept my offer, if I refuse to take payment for your board and lodging?'

'No, no,' replied Arabella, blushing hotly. 'Pray, pardon me; it was done in pure ignorance.'

'I know it was, child; and I'll forgive you if you will let me shelter you for a time at least. I really think it was a special providence that arranged we should be thus thrown together. There is no knowing what might have happened if I had not made a mistake in the train. You are young and inexperienced. You say you have money; you might have been robbed.'

In pleasant chat, the time passed quickly, Arabella every minute growing more in love with this delightful old lady, who was doing all she could to make the poor girl by her side feel at her ease; and the train steamed into Waterloo Station almost before she knew where she was.

A carriage with more tall gentlemen in livery awaited them, and they were at once driven to a mansion in Berkeley Square.

The Duke met his wife in the hall and greeted her tenderly.

'Now, John, dear, I want to introduce this young lady to your notice; but we'll go up into the drawing-room, because I'm going to give you a surprise.'

When they were alone, she commenced: 'This is Miss Arabella Alsworth, who has run away from her guardian because he wanted her to marry our scapgegrace of a nephew; and this, my dear—turning to Arabella—is my husband, the Duke of Falmouth!'

Arabella was struck dumb with astonishment. That she should in this way have stumbled upon

near relatives of the man she was fleeing from seemed impossible.

'So you preferred to run away rather than marry a handsome man, and become a peeress, and the future Duchess of Falmouth?' smiled the Duke.

'Yes; good looks without good principles don't go far with me,' said Arabella; 'and as for titles, if you will pardon me for saying so, I have never set much store by them.'

'Well, my dear girl,' said the Duke pleasantly, 'I like your principles and I admire your frankness.'

'So do I,' interjected the Duchess. 'What do you think she told me, John? That she would not accept of my hospitality unless I let her pay for her board and lodging.'

'Capital!' laughed the Duke. 'What did she propose as a remuneration?'

'Oh, I don't know—I did not ask her. I offered to take her as a companion; but I am not sure that she appreciated even that,' said the old lady, laughing.

Arabella spoke, half pleadingly. 'You said you had forgiven me.'

'So I have; but this is too good a joke to be kept a secret, and you see how my husband enjoys it.'

'That is so,' rejoined his Grace. 'But now for a moment let us be serious. I knew, or fancied I knew, that some day I should have to be introduced to a young lady rejoicing in the name of Arabella Alsworth, and I was quite prepared to find her a silly, empty-headed girl, who wanted to become the wife of a lord, and did not object to pay a good price for the honour. Well, I have had the pleasure of being introduced to her, and I find her a young lady of strong will and determined purpose, who does not care a fig for titles.'

'Thank you,' said Arabella, rising and making him a profound curtsy. 'But,' she continued, 'there is one thing to be said in extenuation of my bad taste in refusing to become Lady Cransford. Before I had the honour of being introduced to your nephew I was engaged to another man.'

'Ho, ho! this is interesting,' said the Duke. 'May I be allowed to know the name of this favoured individual?'

'Yes, certainly. It is Wallis, and he is a Commander in the royal navy.'

'This is really a most remarkable coincidence!' exclaimed his Grace. 'Commander Wallis is also my nephew.'

'Of course he is,' laughed Arabella. 'I knew that long ago; he told me so when he warned me against Lord Cransford.'

'Well, my dear child,' said the Duke after a pause, 'I congratulate you. Frank Wallis is an honest man and a gentleman, and I respect him. He and his mother have only two faults—they are very proud and very poor.'

'Oh, you must not say anything against Frank!' flashed Arabella, 'or I shall pick up my belongings and make tracks for Camden Town or some other suburban retreat.'

'Make tracks!' expostulated the Duchess; 'who taught you to use such an expression as that?'

'I don't know, but I think it was Lord Cransford.'

There was silence for a few minutes, and then the Duchess said: 'Come with me, child, and we will make ourselves presentable; the dinner bell will ring directly.'

THE SENSE OF HEARING IN ANIMALS.

It is not necessary to explain here the complicated structure of the human ear, nor the marvellous way in which rapid movements or vibrations of the air, after reaching our outer ear, are thence conveyed to the brain, and there perceived as noise, or, if sufficiently regular and rapid, as musical sounds. We do not find exactly the same structure in other creatures, nor is the organ of hearing always in the same place or of the same shape. What is usually called the ear—that is, the external ear—is of course but a small part, and not a really essential one, of the organ of hearing. Some creatures have no external ears; while in others, such as hares, and also in nocturnal creatures, the external ears are very large, and serve as ear-trumpets or resonators. Those living underground, on the other hand, have none, neither have reptiles; yet we know the latter can hear and be influenced by sounds; indeed, snake-charmers all use music as one means of taming snakes. Beasts of prey, lions, tigers, &c., have their external ears standing forward to catch sounds in front. The creatures they hunt have theirs turned back, so that they may hear when their enemy behind is pursuing them. The skate tribe, in contrast to this, have their external ear orifices on the top of the head. The external ears of bats are greatly developed; in many, they are longer than the head; and in some kinds they are nearly as long as the body and head together! They are also very mobile; and the bat can, at pleasure, move each ear independently of the other, the better to catch sounds. The fennec, a species of fox, has, however, the largest ears in proportion to its size of any animal.

The auditory organs of different insects are not only in different parts of the body, but in some are in more than one part; they also differ in construction, some being far simpler than others. There is evidently an organ of hearing in the antennae of some insects, though it may not be confined to this part of the body; in locusts, for example, the organ is in the abdomen; while grasshoppers and crickets have ears in their anterior legs. These latter are two oval, glassy structures, whose purpose was for long a puzzle to observers; they are now, however, known to consist of a group of cells varying in size, each cell being in connection with a nerve-fibril and containing an auditory rod.

The wood-cricket makes a loud noise by rubbing the edges of its wing-cases together. This noise is so loud that in some countries it is kept in captivity as we should keep a bird, and its note can be heard from one end of a village to another. These are call-notes or love-songs, and are made by the males only. The common field-cricket in the same way sits at the entrance of its burrow stridulating or making this peculiar note till a female approaches; then a softer note succeeds, and he caresses the female with his antennae. The house-cricket acts in a similar way, as do many other insects. The musical instruments

thus used are different, but the object of this insect music is the same. It is therefore certain that other insects of the same family can both hear and take pleasure in the sounds thus made by the males, or they would not be attracted by them.

One other example of the fact that insects purposely make sounds in order to be heard by their mates may be given. The female of a pair of beetles was put inside a box, where the male speedily found her by the noise she made, locating the sound by his antennae. He took no notice of her until this stridulating noise began; so it was not by smell he discovered her; and further, he failed to find her when his antennae were removed. Beetles and moths may also be frequently seen moving their antennae towards the place from which a sound proceeds.

In a recent number of *Nature* (October 6, 1892) Dr Alcock, of the Indian Marine Survey, describes a red crab which has a stridulating apparatus similar to that of some insects. The object of the noise in this case appears to be to prevent intruders from entering an already occupied burrow; for if one approaches, the crab remonstrates, at first gently, but more and more loudly and shrilly if the intruder does not at once retreat.

The mosquito has feathered antennae, and it has actually been proved that the different minute hairs of which these feathers are really composed respond to different notes; thus, some hairs respond strongly to the note C (five hundred and twelve vibrations per second), which is the note made by the female; other hairs respond to other notes—that is to say, the various hairs begin to vibrate when their own special notes, and those only, are sounded. It is as yet somewhat uncertain whether ants, bees, and wasps can hear; or, at all events, if they can, their range of hearing must be very different from ours, for they take no notice of sounds whether made by the voice, violin, or tuning-fork, whatever may be their pitch. However this may be, whether they can hear or not, ants appear to have auditory organs in their antennae; they are of a peculiar form, consisting of a long tube, sac, and then a nerve: these may serve as microscopic stethoscopes, as it were. A little creature something like an ant can certainly make a chirping noise by rubbing a ribbed surface on its body; ants have a similar rasp or nutmeg-like surface, though they make no sound that we can hear, except, some say, a kind of whine when irritated may, however, be audible to themselves.

The sounds made by many insects change according to their feelings; one wasp, a very clever builder, brings the little pellets of earth for its pouch-like nest with a song of triumph, a busy hum succeeding, as it begins work. Certain sounds are also said to accompany certain acts: thus a sting is preceded by a sharp sound. Shakespeare appears to have known this, for, in *Julius Caesar*, Cassius says:

But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees,
And leave them honeyless.

Antony. Not stingless too.

Brutus. O yes, and soundless too;
For you have stolen their buzzing, Antony,
And, very wisely, threat before you sting.

An angry bee's hum is different from the hum of the merely busy bee. Bees' wings vibrate some four hundred and forty times per second to make their ordinary sound, thus producing the note A, but a tired bee makes the note E, produced by three hundred and thirty vibrations a second. A house-fly makes almost exactly the same note, its little wings actually vibrating three hundred and thirty-five times per second to produce its familiar and irritating buzz. That this almost incredible speed is really attained, and is not mere guesswork, is known in two ways. First, the exact number of vibrations necessary to produce this sound is well known; and still further to prove the fact, a fly has been so fixed that each movement of its wings made a mark upon a rotating cylinder; the marks were then counted; and the calculation as to the number of movements of the little fly's wings, which had already been made from the sound produced, was proved correct.

Spiders, too, can certainly hear. Many drop out of their webs on to the branches below—probably from the habit of thus protecting themselves against wasps—on hearing a shout or sound made by a tuning-fork; others try to seize it; while a high-pitched shout caused several of another kind (the diademas) to raise their legs and strike at the imaginary insect. Spiders are equally attracted by notes of a low pitch, but a very loud sound causes them to retreat; while a heated tuning-fork fills them with terror.

Scorpions have a sensitive ear for most sounds, including those made by a violin. They are even affected by sounds which are quite inaudible to the human ear (does it sound paradoxical to speak of an inaudible sound?); while a tuning-fork so angers a scorpion that it will attempt to sting the fork, if near enough. Blowing air on them immediately stops their flight. Two appendages—or antennae—under the thorax of scorpions probably represent their organs of hearing.

Reptiles, amphibia, fishes, and even creatures as low down in the scale of life as the jelly-fish, all have auditory organs; but whether this always and necessarily implies the power of hearing, is still somewhat doubtful.

Some molluscs, for example, the fresh-water mussel, can boast of auditory organs—of very simple structure, it is true—in their feet; so can the cycas, a bivalve. In fact, do not we ourselves sometimes use other organs besides the ear for hearing? After Beethoven, for example, became deaf, he used to hear by pressing a stick against the piano, while the other end touched his teeth.

Birds undoubtedly have a very keen sense of hearing; thrushes may often be seen intently listening for worms underground, while many can also accurately imitate a great variety of sounds. Parent birds may sometimes be noticed teaching their young ones to sing; some young wrens were lately seen sitting in front of their mother, who was singing; one young bird tried to imitate her, but after a few notes, failed. The mother then began again, when the young bird made a second and a third attempt—at each effort, singing a few more notes correctly, until the whole song was learned. Each of the

young birds was taught in the same way until all could sing.

The higher animals, as is well known, are conscious of sounds; indeed, the horse and the deer have a very acute sense of hearing; while many animals, the dog and the cat, for example, can discriminate between different tones in the human voice, and even between different notes in music. A dog distinguishes perfectly well between a scolding and a caressing tone; while one dog was noticed invariably to howl at the note D, whether played or sung; and Gautier writes of a cat that had a similar dislike to the note G, and always tried to silence the note or the person producing the sound. Livingstone describes a monkey concert he once overheard: screams, chattering, the noise of pebbles dropping and of wood purposely struck against hollow trees, all combined to produce—as one can easily believe—a quite unique effect. Then there are the howler monkeys of America, so called from the hideous noises they keep up the whole night long. Travellers say these sounds can be heard at a distance of two miles, and that the imitation of various animals, together with the sounds of roaring, groaning, and moaning, are enough to make one believe that half the beasts of the forest are in deadly combat. These dismal noises are mostly made by the males; the females join in, but with a less harsh cry.

Cows, again, are very partial to music, and have been known to follow a singer repeatedly, as closely as possible. So will wild cattle. In fact, the power of singing has more than once been the means of rescuing people from certain death through a threatened stampede of wild-cattle in the prairies of America.

In the human ear there are fibres differing in length and in tension, each—according to the ingenious theory of Helmholtz, published a few years ago—responsive to a sound of a certain pitch and to that only. From thirty to thirty thousand vibrations per second are the limits of sound usually audible to the human ear, or about seven octaves; and in the ear are some two thousand eight hundred fibres, or about four hundred to each octave of sound. A difference of about one sixty-fourth of a tone is audible to a trained ear; indeed, some musicians can distinguish even smaller differences. A later theory, however, also propounded by Helmholtz, is that segments of the basilar membrane are stretched like a series of strings, with varying degrees of tension, each string responding to a sound of a particular pitch. This latter view is supported by the fact that though birds have not these fibres—or rods of Corti, as they are also called—they can distinguish differences of pitch. But, on the other hand, the result of experiments made on the *Mysis*, or opossum shrimp, points to the truth of the earlier theory. This little crustacean has two ears, or auditory sacs, in its tail, the different hairs on which respond to different notes; thus, on blowing a keyed horn, one hair was found to respond weakly to D, but strongly to D sharp, another to G; and so on.

One other part of the inner ear must be noticed here—namely, the otoliths or ear-stones, found in the semicircular canals, of which the use, to us at all events, is not yet clearly understood, but which are of great importance in the ears

of some creatures. The crustacea, for example, mostly have a very simple hearing organ; it is merely a sac containing fluid—in which are the otoliths or ear-stones—with feathered auditory hairs, and is found at the base of the lesser or inner pair of antennae—the antennules. This sac is cast with each moult, and with it, of course, the ear-stones; and it has been observed that the crustacea often actually pick up and place in their auditory sacs little grains of sand to serve as otoliths. Perhaps they intensify vibrations. They may easily be observed in the cod, in the shape of a flat white stone in the interior of its head. A theory has quite lately been advanced by Professor Crum-Brown to the effect that these otoliths, which are closely connected with the semicircular canals, are really the organs of a recently-recognised sense—that of *rotation*; that is, that instead of the otoliths responding to auditory vibrations, they and the fluid in the semicircular canals are aids to recognise changes of motion and its direction. (It would be out of place to refer at length here to the fact that one vertebrate, and only one, has but two, instead of three, semicircular canals. If these canals do serve to indicate direction—the three canals corresponding to space, as we know it, of three dimensions—does the absence of one canal point to a possibility of space being limited to two dimensions in some creatures?) In the blind-fish these canals are found to be unusually large; while the otoliths are sometimes single, sometimes numerous. If single, they are free; otherwise, they are held in position by the gelatinous surroundings.

Animals may hear sounds that are inaudible to us. Certainly the sounds that give the keenest pleasure to many animals—cats, for example—are seldom capable of giving pleasure to us. We know, of course, that sounds may be too low or too high—that is, the vibrations may be too slow or too rapid—to be audible to the human ear; but it does not follow that they are equally inaudible to differently-tuned ears. The limits of audible sound are not invariable even in the human ear: women can usually hear higher sounds than men, and the two ears are not, as a rule, equally keen. A sound may be quite inaudible to one person and plainly heard by another. Professor Lloyd-Morgan mentions as an instance of this a case in which the piping of some frogs in Africa was so loud to him as almost to drown his friend's voice, but of which his friend heard absolutely nothing! The same thing may be observed by any one possessing the little instrument known as Gaiton's whistle. The sound made by this whistle can be made more and more shrill, until at last it ceases to be heard at all by most persons. Some can still hear it; but by raising the sound still higher, even they cease to hear. The sound is still being made—that is, the whistle is causing the air still to vibrate, but so rapidly that our ears no longer recognise it, though the existence of these inaudible vibrations is detected by a 'sensitive flame,' as was first shown by Professor Barrett in 1877.

If we dared, at the close of such a long and, we fear, somewhat dry article, touch upon metaphysical subjects, we should point out what a wonderful thought is thus opened before us—

that the world around us may be filled with all manner of noises and musical sounds, which only our deafness prevents us from hearing, but which at some future day we may be able to recognise. Instead of science and knowledge taking away from the beauty of the world, do they not constantly open our eyes to fresh wonders and possibilities, teaching us that the world is far richer, and vastly more interesting, than we ever imagined it to be in the days of our ignorance?

THE VALLEY OF SHEITAN.

A STORY OF THE BHORE GHÁT INCLINE.

By HEADON HILL.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

A RAGGED bear-eyed vulture sat lazily preening itself on the topmost summit of 'The Duke's Nose,' one of those solitary peaks which dot the slope of the Western Gháts towards the plain of the Konkan below, and which are in themselves miniature mountains rising on the rugged face of the great range. The bird suddenly paused in its toilet and sniffed the air. There was a moment's deliberation; and then, as if with an effort, it launched itself into the throbbing noontide atmosphere, winging its flight in ever-widening circles, which brought it at last within view of its quest. But instead of descending to a ready meal, the vulture was constrained to exercise the virtue of patience on a neighbouring crag. For the cause of attraction rose from no half-eaten reliques of a panther's feast, only from the *al fresco* cookery of two young English officers bent on tiffin.

Lionel Heygate and Dick Manners were neither of them particularly imbued with a love of the picturesque, and it was probably by accident, or because of the convenient shade of an 'ashook' tree, that they had selected this spot for a camping-ground in the middle of a day's shooting. The place was a little terrace, twelve feet square, that jutted out from the jungle-covered mountain side. Above and below this natural point of vantage the ground sloped far too abruptly to admit of the operations of the old Mahratta 'shikari,' who was busy heating an 'all-blaze pot' on a fire of twigs.

But though the reason which brought the sportsmen there may have been a matter-of-fact one, the view which they commanded was sufficiently out of the common to hold their attention. Twelve hundred feet below, and, from the steepness of the descent, looking as if a stone could be thrown upon it, commenced the fair stretch of the Konkan plain—the broad belt of fertile land that lies between the foot of the Gháts and the Indian Ocean. Far away in the distance a shimmer of the sea now and again flashed through the sultry haze on the horizon, so fitfully that it might have been taken for the mirage. To the right and left was a wild tangle of mountain scenery. Gorge and ravine, beetling cliff and

giddy precipice, were piled together in bold confusion, all tending upwards to the level summit where lay the vast Deccan tableland. Thickly-matted undergrowth covered everything, softening the rugged grandeur of the ascent with tropical colour. Save for the faint lowing of cattle on the plain below, intense silence reigned.

Suddenly the illusion of perfect isolation was broken by the shriek of a railway whistle and the unmistakable rumble of an advancing train. Manners walked to the edge of the terrace and looked over; then he called to his companion: 'We are just above the reversing station. Come here, Heygate, and see the train come in. It is curious to watch the ways of Clapham Junction in this wilderness.'

Heygate joined his friend. The train was just emerging from tunnel that seemed to spring from the side of a sheer precipice half a mile away, whence the line was carried on a narrow cornice carved in the shelving rock on to a broad plateau, which jutted out below where the two officers stood. This plateau is the half-way house of the Bhore Ghát Incline, which rises from Karjat, in the valley below, to Lonauli, at the top of the Ghát. The railway runs on to the plateau in the form of a V, the left-hand shank of the letter representing the line which has ascended from the valley, and the right-hand one the line which has to still further ascend by many tortuous spirals and dizzy gradients to the tableland of the Deccan above. The necessity for a reversing station at this point is made plain by the facts that at the apex of the V there is a giddy precipice running down two hundred feet sheer to a jungle-covered ravine, and that the plateau was not broad enough for the daring engineers who planned this mighty work to dream of a curve. Thus both up and down trains run into the reversing station with their engines facing in the same direction, and are stopped about a hundred yards from the brink of the precipice. The engine has then to be shunted round the train, to be attached to what was formerly the rear; and the journey is resumed up the mountain to the right or downwards to the left, as the case may be.

The place is a station only in name. There is no platform, and there are no buildings, beyond a rude hut for the use of the pointsmen who keep watch and guard against the ever present danger of that terrible abyss. The station is not used for passenger or goods traffic. It is simply an engineering contrivance for the convenience of the railway itself, and its main features are the multiplied lines of metals used for shunting and reversing the engines. The contrast between the utter loneliness of the stupendous scenery and the triumph of invention which has invaded it is never more striking than when a train thunders on to the plateau, crowded with noisy passengers—'Sahib-logue' and native.

The train which Heygate and Manners were watching was coming down the incline, and was therefore approaching the reversing station along the right-hand shank of the V. The gradient at

that part of the incline is one foot in forty, and the brakes were hard at work all along the train, while the steepness of the track was further counteracted by showers of silver sand poured upon the metals by automatic sprinklers attached to the axles. At the approach to the plateau, a pointsman stood with his hand on the lever, ready to turn the train on to the proper line for the reversing operation.

'By Jove!' exclaimed Manners, 'I shouldn't care to have that fellow's responsibility. See, Heygate; if he made a mistake in the points, the train would run into that short siding to the right, and thence clean over the cliff. There's nothing to stop it; everything depends on that man's nerve and sobriety.'

'I expect he's got plenty of both, or he wouldn't be chosen for the job,' replied the other. 'That nasty drop there must be the place which the natives call the "Valley of Sheitan," because a train full of coolies went over during the construction of the line. The European railwaymen speak of it as the "Valley of the Shadow of Death."

'Well, there's going to be no smash this time,' said Manners; 'the pointsman has vindicated himself. A nigger too, isn't he?'

'Half-caste, I should say, by his costume,' said Heygate. 'He is dressed in what he would probably call "Europe" clothes. Besides, the company wouldn't trust a "pucka" native in a place like that. A mild Hindu might be tempted to send the train over the precipice—as an experiment in mechanics.'

The train had come to a halt with much clatter and jangle. From the eyrie perch where the two sportsmen stood it was only possible to see the roofs of the carriages, and the great panting engine, which was being uncoupled preparatory to reversal. An English guard, conspicuous in white linen tunic and sun helmet, descended from his van and walked along the train in the direction of the first-class carriages in the centre. Approaching one of the latter, he opened the door, and, to the surprise of the watchers above, gave his hand to a young lady, who leaped lightly on to the six-foot way. Then the couple walked away together to the edge of the precipice, and from the man's gesticulations it was evident that he was pointing out features in the surrounding scenery.

'That's rather extraordinary, I should imagine,' said Manners, examining the pair through his field-glasses. 'I wasn't aware that the company expected their people to act as guides to tourists. The guard has an excuse, though. The girl is pretty, I think. What do you make of her?'

Heygate took the glasses and brought them to bear on the couple below. The girl was clad in a plain white dress, with a black band encircling her waist; and her broad-brimmed pith hat was bound with ribbon of the same colour. Even at that distance Heygate could make out that her head was crowned with masses of red-gold hair, and that her fair cheeks wore a delicate pink tint, not common among English women who have been over a year in India. She was listening to her companion with an air of interest, and was palpably impressed with the grandeur of the view.

'Yes, she is pretty,' said Heygate, returning

the glasses; 'and not long in the country, to judge by her complexion.'

The guard and the lady strolled back to the train, and passing to the farther side of it, were lost to view. The engine had now taken up its new position, and all was ready for a start. The half-caste pointsman moved over to another set of levers on the down line; a signal arm, a mile away down the mountain side, fell with a jerk; and the train went clattering off the plateau on to the incline, with another eight miles of winding gradients to descend before it touched level ground again.

For a moment Heygate and Manners were so busy watching the sand-brakes as they were brought into play that they had no eyes for the spot the departing train had lately occupied. Heygate's gaze was still turned in the direction of the giddy track when his friend exclaimed: 'Look there, man! What's the meaning of that? The girl has been left behind.'

'And doesn't seem to mind it much, either,' returned Heygate. 'See! she is going to picnic under the shade of that "anjun."

It was true enough. The trim figure in white had not returned to the railway carriage, but was seated at the side of the line, beneath one of those wonderful shrubs with plum-like leaves and pink and lilac blossoms springing from bough and trunk—a combination which makes you fancy at a distance that you see blue air through the tree, till on coming close the delusion vanishes.

Besides the solitary picnicker and the dusky pointsman a hundred yards away, there was not a sign of life down at the reversing station. The rows of shining metals, glistening white in the rays of the sun, coiled and interlaced in seeming confusion round about the points, and then, diverging, wound away like twin snakes on their several ways, one up and one down the mountain side. But for the girl and the pointsman and the lonely railway track, Heygate and Manners would have looked on primeval wilderness. The picture was so near being one of absolute solitude, that the girl with her paper packet of sandwiches and her homely English dress made a foreground almost startling in its contrast. Somehow, this foreground seemed to convey the idea of helplessness, from the want of proportion between its fragile prettiness and the stern grandeur of its surroundings.

The pointsman came slowly along the line to where the girl sat. As he approached her, he pocketed a pipe which he was smoking and took off his hat, performing both movements with a certain air of ostentation, as though he desired to obtain full credit for his politeness. The girl merely nodded, and went on with her luncheon, listening carelessly while the pointsman stood and talked. It was evident that this was not their first meeting.

Heygate and Manners began to be interested in the scene.

'Extraordinary idyll, this,' said the latter. 'Did you ever see a nigger take his hat off before?'

Heygate had been longer in India than Manners, and put his friend right, remarking: 'He isn't a nigger, old fellow; at least, not a regular nigger. He is a half-caste, and is prob-

ably good deal prouder of his "Europe blood" than you are. They are a worthless lot of vagabonds—these Eurasians, or Chee-Chees, as the Hindus call them. I wonder that girl allows him to speak to her.'

"She can't very well help herself," said Manners. "See! the fellow is getting excited."

The Eurasian was certainly emphasising his speech, the sound, but not the words, of which had risen so as to reach the unseen watchers. He was gesticulating strangely, and repeatedly struck one hand against the other as he urged some point upon his listener. The girl sat apparently unmoved, except that every now and then she turned her gaze up the line, as if hopeful that some one would come and put an end to what looked like an embarrassing *tête-à-tête*. Suddenly the man paused and stood waiting for an answer to some question he had put, and the reply came promptly in the form of an emphatic shake of the head. What followed was the work of a moment. The pointsman stooped and laid his hand roughly on the girl's wrist; there was a slight scream, a responsive shout from the hill-side, a scramble and a rush, half fall, half somersault, down the jungle-covered slope, and Lionel Heygate, torn and bleeding, pushed his way through the matted creepers on to the plateau and gripped the half-caste by the collar. Manners in little better plight followed.

Heygate slung the pointsman round, and released his hold with a violence which sent the man staggering some yards away.

"I trust you have not been alarmed?" he said to the girl, who had risen from her seat and was eyeing her late aggressor with a look in which there was plenty of contempt, but little of fear.

"I was a little frightened," she said, acknowledging Heygate's salutation with a grateful smile. "This place is so lonely. That is the reason why Carnac took advantage. He is too great a coward to do any real harm, I think."

The pointsman stood glowering at the trio a few paces off, his sallow features three shades paler with suppressed passion. But his manner was outwardly apologetic. "I meant no wrong," he began in the servile whine which the unfortunate Eurasians have inherited from the Asiatic side of their ancestry, but which sounds doubly repugnant in the English tongue. "I only wanted to make Miss Hudson attend to what I was saying; that is why I touched her. I am very sorry."

"Well, go about your business; and thank your stars I didn't throw you over the cliff," said Heygate. "You ought to have known better than to speak to this young lady at all."

The man slunk quietly back to his levers, and Heygate turned to his new protégée. "You seem to know the fellow?" he asked, with a curiosity which he tried hard to justify by the circumstances.

"Yes," she answered. "I live at Lonauli—the station at the top of the incline—with my father; and Luke Carnac lives there too. He—he worries me a good deal. You see," she went on with a slight blush, "he considers himself a European; and, as my father is in the employ of the railway company also, Luke cannot understand that we don't quite look upon him as one of ourselves. I did not know he was on duty at the points

to-day, or I should not have come here. Would you mind waiting till the train comes up the Ghât? I am going back to Lonauli by it."

Of course the two officers assented. A shout to the 'shikari' resulted in the transfer of their temporary camp to the plateau, where, while the contents of the all-blaze pot were being overhauled, Sibyl Hudson was induced to explain her presence at the reversing station. It was very simple. Her father, the guard of the train which had passed, had brought her down to see the wonderful view from the top of the precipice, and had arranged for her to go back by the next train that came up from Bombay. She had only come out from England three months before, and had travelled up to Lonauli at night. Hence the beauties of the reversing station were new to her.

It was not long before the train came clanking up the incline, and pulled up close to where the little party was seated. The guard, who had promised Sibyl's father to give her a lift home, got down and came over to them, looking rather surprised to find his charge in strange company; but he was civil enough when told that the two sportsmen had waited by her request, because she became alarmed at the solitude of the place. The girl seemed proudly reluctant to refer to the impertinence of the half-caste. Even when Heygate, bidding her farewell at the carriage door, said: "Of course you will get that impudent fellow discharged," she answered: "Oh, it is not worth troubling about; Luke will not have an opportunity of being rude again.—But I am very grateful to you for coming to my assistance."

"May I—that is may we—call and see if you are the worse for your adventure? I mean if we happen to camp near Lonauli?" asked Heygate, loth to let the acquaintance come to an end so abruptly, but not pausing to analyse his motives.

The girl hesitated for a moment, and then looked him frankly in the face. "I do not know why you should not," she said; "you are gentlemen, and—and will be able to understand that it is possible for my father to be a gentleman too, though he is a guard on the railway. He will be glad to see you and thank you himself."

The train panted slowly over the points, past the scowling half-caste, busy now with his levers. Heygate and Manners stood looking after it as it wound its way along the cornice-like ledge that approached the first tunnel. It was not till the last carriage had disappeared that either of them spoke, and then it was Manners who said: "No matter what her belongings may be, Miss Sibyl is most assuredly a lady. Father, a service-man come to grief, perhaps.—You seemed rather struck, I thought, Lal?"

Heygate's reply hardly touched the question. He was looking meditatively at the pointsman. "Come; let's be going," he said; "we shall get a shot at a "sambur" perhaps, now that the sun is sinking. If I stay here, I shall punch that nigger's head, and get fined in the district court."

They shouldered their rifles and stepped out, downwards towards the valley, followed by the 'shikari.' Manners knew his friend, and didn't trouble to point out to him that he was somewhat

inconsistent in his description of the half-caste. Before their trifling adventure, Heygate had pulled him up for calling the man a nigger. Now, Heygate called the man a nigger himself.

BUILDING SUPERSTITIONS.

THE manner of reception by the inhabitants of India of European ideas and customs is full of interest to the student of sociology, and there is often a conspicuous humorous element present. When a pillar-post was first set up in a village in Northern India, the simple people jumped to the astonishing conclusion that it was a new deity, and accordingly decked it with flowers for the purposes of worship. With regard to the recent census, there was great excitement and diversity of opinion. Some of the more careful souls were under the impression that it was a taxing trick. Others—and their name is legion—thought that one object of the census was to procure lists of persons eligible for sacrifice. Not only the census but every public work in the way of bridges or railways excites great consternation. It is believed that every undertaking of this description is started by a propitiatory sacrifice of human beings. As late as the year 1880 the *Times* mentioned that the new harbour-works in Calcutta were regarded with great suspicion by thousands of credulous natives, who firmly believed that persons would be sacrificed to ensure stability to the masonry!

Traces of this curious and gruesome idea are to be found not only in the East but also in Europe, and much light has been thrown on this subject of late by such students of early history as Mr Tylor and Mr G. L. Gomme. It seems to have had its origin in the desire to appease the wrath of the earth-spirit for the intrusion, by digging, into its domain; and blood, especially human blood, was considered the highest offering it was possible to make. In primitive societies it held its place as one of the most cherished institutions, and it is still practised by many of the modern representatives of the first and rudest congregations of men. In Borneo, one is not surprised to find that it is, or was until quite recently, still in operation. At the erection of an important house a deep hole was dug and the first post suspended over it; a slave-girl was then placed in the hole, and at a given signal the post descended, crushing the girl to death. In New Zealand, human beings were first killed and then placed in post-holes; while in the Sandwich Islands it was the custom to bury children. The Fijians, who were in many respects the most advanced and intellectual of all barbarous races, varied the custom in a not unexpected manner, for they killed and ate men when setting up the pillars of a temple; and again held a similar feast when the building was complete. The unfortunate victims were, as a rule, criminals or prisoners taken in battle; but the noble savage was not over-scrupulous in his methods of obtaining the necessary victims, and would quickly make what anthropologists call in the matter of marriage an 'exogamous selection' in default of the usual supply. The Siamese used to adopt the rough and ready way of seizing the first unlucky pedestrian

who passed the newly-completed excavations. The Japanese, on the contrary, if we may credit a certain seventeenth-century account of these interesting people, believed that it was necessary to build on the body of a *willing* victim; and it is said that when a great wall was to be built, some wretched slave, tired of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, would offer himself as a foundation, and 'lie down to pleasant dreams' in the trench to be crushed by the heavy stones.

In India, as we have seen, the belief still prevails, and the practice, it is thought, must have been very general at one time—perhaps until the British possession. 'The idea is, I believe, current throughout India,' says Captain R. C. Temple. 'It is certainly as strong in Rajputana and the Punjab as in Bengal proper. Every old or even comparatively modern fort or palace in the Punjab has some such tradition; and the people say it was only the advent of the British in the Punjab, some forty years ago, that stopped the practice.'

The ancient Irish seem to have been convinced of the efficacy of this 'strange architectonic principle,' as one writer puts it, as under the walls of the only round towers yet examined human skeletons have been found. Some authorities think an explanation may be found in the fact that the towers were perhaps built on the site of old churchyards; but the general opinion seems to favour the sacrificial theory. Anyhow, the belief in it is not uncommon in Ireland, and many patriotic natives still think that the early English settlers built their castles on the bodies of the slaughtered Irish; and often point out certain castles under the walls of which human bones have been discovered. Even in Scotland the belief still prevails in some parts that the Picts bathed their foundation stones with human blood. In England, bones have been discovered under the walls of several of the oldest churches, placed in such a position that there is but little doubt that the walls were built over them, though it is unlikely that human life was taken especially for that purpose.

During the dawn of Christianity in these Isles, the priests of the new religion, it is known, often had to effect a compromise between their own doctrines and heathen customs, in order to facilitate the introduction of their creed. But although many strange rites and ceremonies were not attacked, it is impossible to believe that human sacrifices were ever regarded with indifference by those noble 'sowers of the seed,' in spite of the following legend. It is said that when St Columba first attempted to build on Iona, the walls, by the power of some evil spirit, fell down as fast as they were erected. The saint received supernatural information that they would never stand unless a human victim was buried alive. According to one account, the lot fell on Oran, the companion of the saint. Others say that Oran voluntarily devoted himself to ensure the safety of the building. At the end of three days, St Columba had the curiosity to take a farewell look at his old comrade, and ordered the earth to be removed. Oran opened his eyes and said: 'There is no wonder in death, and hell is not as it is reported.' The saint was so shocked at this impiety, that he instantly ordered the earth

to be thrown in again, uttering the words: 'Earth ! Earth ! on the mouth of Oran, that he may blab no more.' This saying, in its Celtic form, passed into a proverb in the Highlands.

With the increasing spread of a higher religion, by slow modifications the human sacrifice was abandoned ; and it is curious to read of the ingenious attempts made to circumvent the devil or local spirits by a substitute. In some places an empty coffin was walled up, and in others a lamb or horse would be sacrificed. By the Quop Dyaks, a chicken is thrown in the post-holes ; and it is a remarkable coincidence that in France this kind of substituted sacrifice has survived. In a district of Normandy—La Neuville Chant d'Oisel—a cock is killed, and its blood shed upon the threshold of a newly-built house, in the belief that the neglect of the custom would cause the tenant's death within a year. From discoveries made in Italy, we find that the old Romans, with perhaps praiseworthy deceit, artfully substituted statues and busts for burial under foundations, and hundreds of such works of art have been found buried in this manner. In this case, the resources of art and civilisation effectually modified a grim old superstition. In Roumania, the builders, instead of immolating an offending unit of humanity, take the innocent course of laying down in his stead a rod of the same length as the man, which no doubt produces results equally satisfactory. There is a curious and fairly well known fact bearing on this point in connection with the Cistercian Abbey in Scotland which was founded by Devorguila, daughter of Allan, Lord of Galloway, and mother of John Baliol, the vassal-king of Scotland. Its name was originally New Abbey, but it was afterwards known as the *Dulce Cor*, or 'Sweetheart Abbey,' from the circumstance that on the death of John Baliol, the husband of Devorguila, his heart was embalmed, enclosed in a box of ivory bound with silver, and built into the walls of the church.

As many persons besides folklorists are doubtless aware, there exists in many country districts a popular notion that the first child baptised in a new font is sure to die. Mr Baring-Gould thinks this idea is 'a reminiscence of the sacrifice which was used for the consecration of every dwelling and temple in heathen times, and of the pig or sheep killed and laid at the foundation of churches.'

A corresponding belief is often discovered amongst certain peoples, the knowledge of which is apt to make the 'general reader' assent to the sweeping proposition of the poet, that 'only man is vile.' The foundation sacrifice, as we have seen, originated in the desire to mitigate the wrath of an earth-spirit for encroaching on his possessions ; and naturally a water-spirit was regarded by our simple ancestors, with their imperfect knowledge of physical phenomena, as also expecting an occasional tribute. Hence the reluctance, or, rather, superstitious objection to save the life of a drowning man. The Hindu will not rescue a fellow-being, should he fall into the sacred Ganges, for it is thought that the spirit would be defrauded of his just dues. Mr Tylor quotes an account from Bohemia as late as the year 1860 to the effect that certain fishermen would not venture to snatch a drowning man from the water, as they 'feared that

the "water-man" (that is, water-demon) would take away their luck in fishing, and drown them at the first opportunity.' Every reader of this will of course remember the scene in Sir Walter Scott's novel of *The Pirate*, where the pedlar refuses to help Mordaunt to save the shipwrecked sailor. 'Are you mad,' said he, 'to risk the saving of a drowning man ? Wot ye not, if you bring him to life again, he will be sure to do you some capital injury ?' Scott thought it remarkable that 'so inhuman a maxim should have ingrafted itself upon the minds of a people otherwise kind, moral, and hospitable.' This belief, it is scarcely possible to doubt, was but a survival in a modified form of the above theory ; and repulsive as it looks in the light of our present physical and moral theories, it had a certain value in the early days of mankind.

One cannot do better than conclude with the words of Mr Gomme. 'It is not too much to say that the foundation sacrifice—horrible in its most savage form, brutal in its later forms—had very much to do with the preservation of early society. So low down in the scale of man's history there is very little law, very little restraint upon the passions and temper of brute-force. But once place as a barrier to lawlessness and license the sanctification by blood sacrifice, sometimes, as we know, human sacrifice, and at all events within the home, perhaps within the precincts of the home, what law has not done, the fear of offending local spirits, who have accepted sacrifice, will effectually do.'

'THE SIMPLETON.'

'QUIET to ride and drive.'

Such was 'The Simpleton's' recommendation in the auctioneer's list, and this it was which induced Harry Wentworth, farmer, of Bromford, to attend the auction next day in the adjoining market-town of Essleton. 'I reckon I'm about as good a judge of horse-flesh as any man in these parts,' he said to his wife ; 'and if this mare is fit, I'll have her. I want a quiet animal for you and the youngsters to drive ; but she'll have to carry me sometimes ; and if she can't put on the pace a bit, I shan't buy her.'

The animal's appearance favourably impressed him. Harry Wentworth, though rather too fond of sounding his own praises, was no fool—as are many whose good points would be lost to the world were they themselves dumb—and the auctioneer's laudations fell on deaf ears when Harry sallied forth to purchase horse-flesh or cattle.

'I don't want other folk to judge for me, or to tell me what's what,' he was wont to say ; 'I've got brains and eyes, and, thank Heaven, I know how to use 'em both.'

The auctioneer was an honest man. 'There's just one point about the mare, gentlemen,' said he, 'that I may as well tell you of before we begin. I like fair-play, and I don't want a man to come to me in a day or two, and say : "You took me in over that animal : she won't do this," or "she does the other." Now that mare, gentlemen, is perfectly sound in wind and limb. She hasn't a single vice about her ; but, as I say,

there's just one thing some of you may consider a failing: she won't take a fence of any sort. And the reason is this. Her present owner rode her in the hunt nearly all last season; and one day, after taking several gates and hedges in grand style, she landed her master and herself in a deep pool, and they had a hard struggle for it, I can warrant you. He's often tried to coax her to jump since, but she always refuses, and that, gentlemen, caused him to name her "The Simpleton." "What's in a name?" gentlemen? Well, I've explained it to you in this case. I may add that Colonel Phillimore is heartily sorry to part with her; but as his regiment is ordered abroad, he is thinning the ranks of his favourites. —Now, gentlemen, what shall I say for the mare?" And so on.

After several minutes of spirited bidding, "The Simpleton" was knocked down to Mr Wentworth for a good round sum, and he almost repented his expensive purchase when the excitement of competition was over, and immediately resolved himself into a committee of ways and means to see if he could cut down his expenses in certain quarters, in order to make up for "this piece of extravagance," as he called it.

"I reckon I'm the simpleton," he told himself in confidence, as he handed his cheque to the auctioneer.

Scene—the bar-room of "The Sow's Ear" at Bromford. Time—8 P.M. *Dramatis personæ*—Tom Lawford, otherwise "Lazy Tom," and "Daft Sammy"; or, to be more exact, Samuel Barrett—the former a young man, till lately in the employ of Harry Wentworth, but discharged by that worthy for persistent idleness.

His companion, Daft Sammy, was about fifty-five, or, it may be, sixty years of age: a small evil-looking man, with cunning gray eyes, and an habitual sneer on his unpleasant countenance. He was the village fool, but shrewd enough where his own interests were concerned, and in reality more rogue than fool.

On this particular evening, Lazy Tom, sauntering through the village, met Sammy, and secured his good-will for an indefinite period by inviting him to partake of a glass of beer, or anything he liked, as he generously put it, in the bar-room of "The Sow's Ear." To Sammy's astonishment, but not less to his gratification, he had not one glass only, but several; and having carefully thought his plan out beforehand, Tom, seizing a fitting opportunity, opened fire.

"Ah, you're right, Sammy, my boy," said he; "times is 'ard an' work is scarce, an' folks is a' starvin'. I daresay now, if a friend was to give you a chance of makin' up for some o' your misfortins, you'd be much obliged to that friend, eh?"

"Try me," said Sammy, with a knowing leer.

"Well, maybe I will try you," said Tom, "maybe I will. I've taken a likin' to you, Sammy, an' I'd like to do you a good turn."

"Ay, ay, ay" Tom Lawford at the same time, I'll be bound," returned the old man. "Ah! now, you're a 'cute un, ain't you?" he added admiringly. "What game be you up to now?"

"Sh! Can't you speak quietly?" said the 'cute un, glancing round cautiously. Then, seeing the coast was clear, he drew his chair nearer to

Sammy's, and whispered: "You knows the colour o' gold, I suppose, Sammy?"

The restless gray eyes lit up with the fire of avarice. "Gold?" he muttered—"gold, gold, yellow gold!" his voice rising higher and higher, till his companion roughly shook his arm. "What was you a-sayin' of, Mr Lawford?"

"You're an old fool," said Lawford savagely. "If you can't keep your tongue quiet, you won't smell it even, let alone see it."

"All right, Mr Lawford—all right; I won't make no noise. What is it?"

"Well, look 'ere, Sammy," said Tom impressively, laying his hand on the other's arm; "I'll tell you; but mind, if you wags that clapper o' yours to anybody about it, you'll not only lose your share o' that gold, you likes so much, but maybe you'll get a good deal o' what you don't like at all: you knows what I mean?"

"Ay, I understand, Mr Lawford," said Sammy submissively, and turning pale at the threat.

"That's right, then. Well"—and Tom glanced uneasily round the room again, then went on in a hoarse whisper: "You knows Farmer Wentworth, Sammy?"

"Yes," responded Sammy.

"An' I daresay you knows the bank at Essleton, in the High Street?"

Yes, Sammy knew that too.

"Lor, how thirsty I be: 'ave a drop more, Sammy."

Not until Sammy had twice seen the bottom of his glass did Tom Lawford proceed.

"Now, Sammy, I places a great deal o' faith in your intelligence, an' I don't think you needs to have things explained to you very much: you seems to see right through 'em at once, like, eh?"

"You're right there, Tom Lawford," agreed Sammy, adopting a more familiar tone under the influence of the liquor Tom had primed him with. "I can see about as fur through a brick wall as most folk."

"Yes, I know'd it.—Listen to me, then. Farmer Wentworth's goin' to take a bag o' gold to the bank next Tuesday, an' it haven't got to get there.—D'y' twig?"

Oh yes, Sammy "twigged," but he had his doubts. "I don't see how we be to manage it, Tom," was his answer; "farmer's a rough chap, an' carries a heavy ridin'-whip, an'—p'raps?"

"Then let somebody else see for you, if you can't see for yourself," Tom interrupted. "D'y' think I spoke to you afore I made my plans? Not likely. We can't do it by ourselves, nor in the open.—Here, I may as well tell you straight away, or you'll be a 'inderin' we wi' your opinions, if I tells you bit by bit. I ha' bin thinkin' it over ever since Harry Wentworth turned me off, Sammy, 'ow I might 'ave a bit o' that yellow stuff as 'e takes to the bank every now an' agen. It don't matter to you where I 'eard it, but there's a bit more'n usual goin' to Essleton next Tuesday, an' I thinks to myself, "Tom Lawford, you're out o' work, an' a bit o' that tin 'ud come in useful." Then I wondered 'ow I'd do it, an' who'd 'elp me, an' I thought o' you, Sammy, amongst others. You're pretty strong, though you be so small, an' you ain't pertickler, I knows, when you're well paid, be you?"

Cham
don't
A
carca
be a
refer
he g
'ere
rest
bobb
me,
some
an'
Bru
light
our
you
que
'not
him
plan
road
Sam
leav
a f
wh
thr
gat
an'
thi
ha
con
sec
to
fo
Te
w
cu
w
a
an
id
on
sp
c
P
c
c
a
u

'No,' said Sammy, 'p'raps not; leastways, if it don't get me into trouble.'

'Ah! you're precious careful about that old carcass o' yours, I knows,' sneered Tom. 'It'll be a pretty good lump,' he added, as though referring to Sammy's diminutive figure; 'an' if he gets it, Tom Lawford won't be seen around 'ere for a long time to come. But you an' the rest can't 'ook it so easy; we should 'ave the bobbies down on us directly. They won't s'pect me, 'owever; I'll leave word I've got a place somewhere. There's Jack Smith an' Dirty Micky, an' three or four fellows as is down 'ere from Brummagem, an' as we've got to do it by daylight, we'll 'ave to disguise ourselves an' alter our clothes a bit, or we'll get copped as sure as you're sittin' in that chair.'

'There ain't goin' to be no murder, is there?' queried Sammy fearfully.

'Murder? No, of course not,' replied Lawford; 'not if we can manage without it,' he added to himself.

'You knows the old spinny, Sammy—"the plantation," as the Squire calls it—with a private road runnin' through it?'

'Ay, ay,' said the old man.

'Well, that's where we're goin' to do the trick, Sammy, my boy. Squire give Harry Wentworth leave to use it, 'cause it's a short-cut. There's a five-barred gate at each end o' the road, an' when Farmer Wentworth—curse him!—comes through the one gate, he'll be betwixt the two gates, won't 'e, Sammy?'

'For certin,' Sammy replied.

'An' e'll 'ave the spinny on each side on 'im, an' a 'orse under 'im—which means as 'e can't get through it—won't 'e, Sammy?'

Sammy nodded acquiescence.

'An' that ain't all,' said Lawford, rubbing his hands, and chuckling over his plot; 'for when 'e comes through the fust gate, an' gets near the second, e'll see a depitition o' four on us ready to wait on 'im.'

'Then he'll turn back,' said Sammy.

'Yes, o' course 'e will, Sammy, an' e'll find four more on us gents at t' other gate.'

'You'll be a-hiddin' in the spinny, I s'pose.'

'That's it, an' we shall ha' things o' this sort,' Tom continued, touching a thick oak stick; 'an' when 'e sees as there's no way out on it, e'll cuss an' swear a bit, an' then shell out. Then we shall tie 'im up, or e'll be at Essleton in a twinklin', an' bring the p'lease after us.'

'You tie Harry Wentworth up? Ha, ha, ha!' and Sammy laughed as loudly as he dared at the idea.

'No, ye daft coon, not me, nor you, but eight on us.'

'E might jump off, an' get away through the spinny,' said Sammy.

'E won't leave the mare till he's obliged, you can bet your boots,' was the reassuring answer.

'Ay, but the mare might jump the gate an' us,' persisted Sammy.

'Didn't I tell 'ee 'er can't jump? Well, 'er can't, or her won't, then; or we'd 'ave to alter our way o' goin' to work.'

'An' what be you goin' to do wi' the creetur?' asked Sammy.

'Oh, fasten 'er to a tree, for if she got 'ome wi' a empty saddle, we'd soon be found out.'

'W'y not seize the reins as 'e comes through the fust gate?'

'W'y not put ourselves in jail at once, you means? It's too near the 'ighway, Sammy Barrett. Besides, he'd be usin' that loaded whip o' hisn, an' we might 'ave to tap 'im a few times to keep 'im quiet, an' we wants to do it without that, if we can. E'll be fairly flummoxed accordin' to my plan.—Now, mind, if you shows the white-feather, an' don't turn up, you knows what to expect.'

'I'll be there safe enough, Tom Lawford; I'm always about, you knows, when there's any money to be got; but,' he added, a sudden thought paling his cheek, 'e don't carry no pistol, do 'e, Tom?'

'Never!' was the reply; 'never used to at least. But we shall be safe, we shall be safe,' and Tom Lawford thought, with satisfaction, albeit not unmixed with dread, of the two revolvers belonging to his Birmingham friends, which were to be used if needs be—at anyrate to intimidate their intended victim.

'Well, I'm off now,' he said presently. 'Bye-bye, Sammy, an' don't you breathe a word to no one.'

'Harry, dear, I wish you would go round the road instead of through the plantation. You really should be more careful with nearly two hundred pounds about you.'

'Oh, nonsense, Dolly,' said her spouse. 'What silly fear has crept into that pretty little head of yours now? Give me another kiss. I must be off at once. You may trust me to take care of No. 1. Nobody is likely to meddle with a man on horseback in broad noonday. I'll be back to tea—Good-bye, pet.' And he was gone.

Half-an-hour's easy riding brought him to the plantation gate. He opened it with his whip, and rode through, fastening it behind him, and was within fifty yards of the opposite entrance when from out of the thicket four figures appeared, and ranged themselves across the pathway in front of him, close to the gate. He could hardly believe his senses, and would scarcely have been more surprised if a voice had shouted in his ear—'And, Saxon—I am Roderick Dhu!'

The men's faces were hardly visible, being partly concealed by their caps, which were pulled down low in front, and also by their turned-up coat collars, and scarfs tied round the lower half of the face.

'What tomfoolery is this?' thought Harry. 'Well, I must turn back, I suppose. I'm not going to run the risk of a closer interview with those blackguards.'

But when he turned the mare's head round, a cold perspiration broke out all over him, for another quartet of the same stamp had sprung up, as it seemed, from out of the ground, and guarded the gate at which he had entered in the same silent yet unmistakably hostile manner as the others.

'What the deuce shall I do?' he exclaimed in an angry undertone, and half-a-dozen wild and absurd schemes rushed through his brain—a gallop through the thicket—a dash at those muffled figures at the gate—but he felt helpless, almost hopeless.

'The Simpleton,' too, seemed to know that

something was wrong. She fidgeted about, and champed her bit fretfully, as if, like her master, eager to do, yet not knowing what to do. All this occupied but a moment's space.

What was that? A voice behind him calling to him to dismount. He jerked the mare round again, and demanded—'What do you want?'

And the same voice replied: 'Get off that 'oss, an' we'll tell you.'

A bright idea occurred to Harry. 'If only they'll keep at a respectable distance, and I can parley with them a bit, somebody or other will surely be coming this way soon, and then the villains will decamp.'

But they had no intention of allowing him to gain time in that way. 'Look 'ere, mister,' said another, 'be you comin' down or not? 'cause if you don't get off in two shakes, we'll 'ave to make you!'

Wentworth made no reply, but gave a hasty backward glance, which showed him that those behind had not moved, and then, taking a firmer grip of his riding-whip, he sat still as before.

'You won't budge, I can see,' said the last speaker, 'so we'll come an' 'elp you off; an' mind, if you kicks up any fuss, I'll make a hole in you;' and he took a revolver from his breast-pocket.

Still Wentworth did not move.

'Come on, mates!' said the cowardly fellow. 'You there behind, close up,' he shouted to those in the background.

As they drew near, Wentworth made a desperate resolve to dash through them, and, if possible, open the gate, and escape.

They must have read his thoughts, for one of them, Tom Lawford, suddenly snatched a revolver from one of the others, and, turning back, posted himself by the gate again.

Poor Harry was in despair at this last move, but resolved to sell his life dearly, bullets or no bullets, and made a sudden plunge forward, riding-whip uplifted, when they came to within twenty yards of him.

The rascals, surprised at this unexpected attack, drew to each side of the path, with the intention of seizing the reins and striking him with their clubs as he passed, but Harry hit out vigorously right and left, dug his heels into the mare's sides, and shot past them at a mad gallop.

Ping! ping! Two or three shots whizzed by him harmlessly, and then Tom Lawford, in a fit of nervous excitement, took aim at the mare's head, intending to bring her to her knees, but only succeeded in grazing her neck.

Harry tried to check her speed, for they were almost at the gate, but failed.

She had taken the bit between her teeth!

He turned sick, shut his eyes, and clapped her firmly with his knees. As he did so, he felt himself lifted into the air, and the next moment, re-opening his eyes, to his unbounded astonishment, he and the mare were over the gate, and careering along the Essleton high-road at a speed 'The Simpleton' had never equalled when following the hounds in full cry.

When Harry Wentworth returned to the spinny, with a force of six armed and mounted constables, and a dozen volunteers from the

nearest public, he found only one man there, Tom Lawford, and he lying close to the gate, almost at his last gasp. They poured some spirits down his throat, and he looked around wildly. Then seeing the police, he murmured: 'Ah, the p'lece. Ye're cheated for once. That mare's done for me. She kicked me somehow as she cleared the gate, an' as I fell, I saw them cowards aflyin' for their lives.—Ah, ye won't ave to use the darbies this time. I'm goin'—goin' fast.—Oh, Mr Wentworth, sir, forgive me, forgive me!' Then, suddenly raising himself up, he shrieked: 'No! I won't die! Save me, oh, save me!' and fell back dead.

The rest were caught before forty-eight hours had passed, except 'Daft Sammy,' whose body was afterwards discovered in a brook some miles away.

'The Simpleton's' fame spread far and wide, and Harry had many handsome offers for her, but he refused them all.

'Perhaps she'll oblige me now by taking a gate or a hedge occasionally, Dolly,' he said to his wife.

But 'The Simpleton' was never known to jump again.

THE CHILD-SEASON.

O SUNNY life of childhood! blossoming
To gladden all the world: as if the Spring
Were captive made, and your soft hair ungird
Had netted all Spring's sunshine as it stirred:
Your little nest has still its singing bird.

O youth! fast learning to be wise and vain,
Whose aims are lofty. In the race for gain
Great things seem possible—and yet to-day
Some grave that is a milestone on the way
Says o'er the world's loud voice, 'Kneel here and pray.'

O hearts that pain has chastened! well ye know
The song of thankfulness. Ye but forego
Your joy a little while. The leaves may tell
Of Autumn; yet be brave: ye have fought well.
Weep not: ye know that other fighters fell.

O aged heads that many a Yule-tide snow
Has whitened! Though the time be long ago
Since first ye laughed in childhood's golden ray,
The Child of Bethlehem takes your hand to-day.
God's blessing crowns your far more perfect way.

HARRIET KENDALL.

** TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.
- 4th. Offerings of Verse should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.
- If the above rules are complied with, the Editor will do his best to ensure the safe return of ineligible papers.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Limited,
47 Paternoster Row, LONDON; and EDINBURGH.